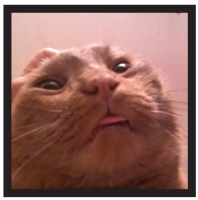
DoUG
Catches Up
a fancomic by
Kori Michele & Pat L.

Doug was created by Jim Jinkins and the cartoon is owned by Nickelodeon and Disney.

None of the above were involved in the creation of this comic, nor do they endorse it in any way. It is a completely un-official fanwork that is not meant to infringe on the copyright of the IP owners.

It is basically illustrated fanfiction.
Thank you for understanding.

This book was a collaborative effort. It was written and edited by both Kori and Pat. Kori penciled and toned, and Pat inked and lettered. Kori designed and printed the book in Vermont. Printed in September, 2019.



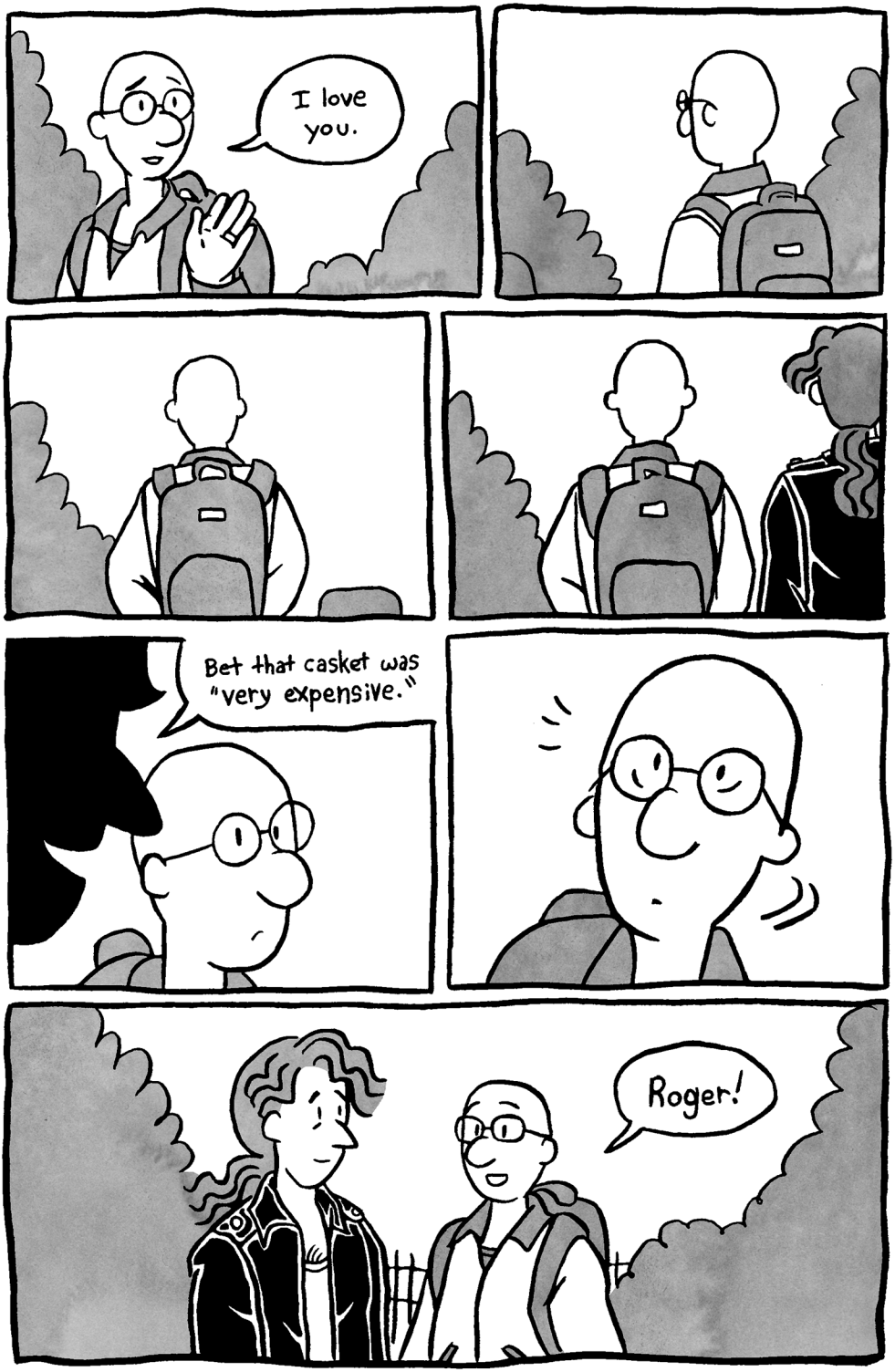
Kori Michele Handwerker lives in Maine and loves zines, glitter, and revolution. They're queer, tired, and hopeful.

Pat L lives in Maryland with his dog, Maxwell. Both of their bellies are full of Old Bay and crabs.

Kori and Pat both have masters degrees in cartooning from the Center for Cartoon Studies in White River Junction, Vermont.

Dear Journal-
It's me, Doug.
I can't believe it's been 25 years since I first moved to Bluffington- and 18 since I moved away from it.
I went back for the first time in a decade today- and, well, I didn't know what to expect-
But it seemed like the right thing to do to pick up and write about it.
It all started with a funeral...

BUD
DINK
You gonna be okay sweetie?
yeah, I'll be fine.
I'm gonna go meet up with the girls
I'll pick you up in a couple hours
Thanks.
Be Safe!
If they say anything that makes you uncomfortable...
I'll be okay
Thank you
I love you.


I love you.
Bet that casket was "very expensive."
Roger!

I know I shouldn't but -
I feel bad for not reaching out to him at all since leaving.
That's right, you shouldn't.
He wouldn't want you feeling bad at his funeral.
Also, your parents came to visit him and Tippi all the time.
He knew what you were up to. He was glad you were doing what you loved.

oh?
Have you lived here this whole time, Roger?
Yeah.
what can I say?
It's home
Hey.
There's no way to make this less forward, but do you want to grab a coffee?
I'd like to catch up with you about some stuff, while you're in town.
Oh.
Sure,
That sounds nice.
!

VROOOOOM
HONK CAFÉ
ARRT!
Hey-
Don't get too cozy there, Funnie
oh
Sorry
Idiдn't realize-
-we'd Stopped

After you.
what are you having?
My treat.
Oh, thanks, uh-
I'll have Something sweet and light.
I'll get us a seat

So, what do you think of the place?
Oh!
It seems like a nice place to hang.
Thanks!
Me and Chalky put a lot of work into it.

You and Chalky own this place?
Wow!
Yeah! We'd originally invested in Al & Moo's "Beetcoin-"
-but-
-we sold all of our coins and opened this place!
It was kind of our dream to make a place for this generation of Bluffingtonians to hang out-
-kind of like we got to have with the honkerburger.
I'm impressed, Roger!
We're hoping to open another in the future
You and Chalky- that's an unexpeced duo! I didn't know you were so close!
Wait until I tell you we're getting married!

WOAH!
Oh-
um-
I'm sorry.
I mean congratulations.
Its okay, you can be surprised.
No, I shouldn't have made any assumptions.
It seems like you really have your life together.
I'm happy for you!
T-thanks-
Now tell me what you've been up to!

Oh, well-
Connie and I got married after graduating art school together, and we're doing great!
I really love th-
I really love Connie a lot! And our 10th Anniversary is coming up!
Wow! congrats!
Thanks!
I've been doing mostly freelance illustration work. And I, um- I'm tinkering with this Kids' graphic novel idea, but-
-that's kind of a pipe dream...
But, hey, enough about me!
Tell me all about how you & Chalky got to-gether!
Hmm - well...
After high school, mom cut me off from the money- which was actually drying up, anyway...

But I wasn't too worried about it at the time, old man Flanagan had me selling used cars for him
And I was good at selling cars. But can't say I was honest about it.
I was living with Ned, Boomer, & Willie. It was a hoot.
Then Ned joined the Army.
He said he wanted more out of life, wanted to feel like he was part of "Something bigger."
Fine! Go - you loser!
Then out of nowhere, Ned died. In the line of duty.

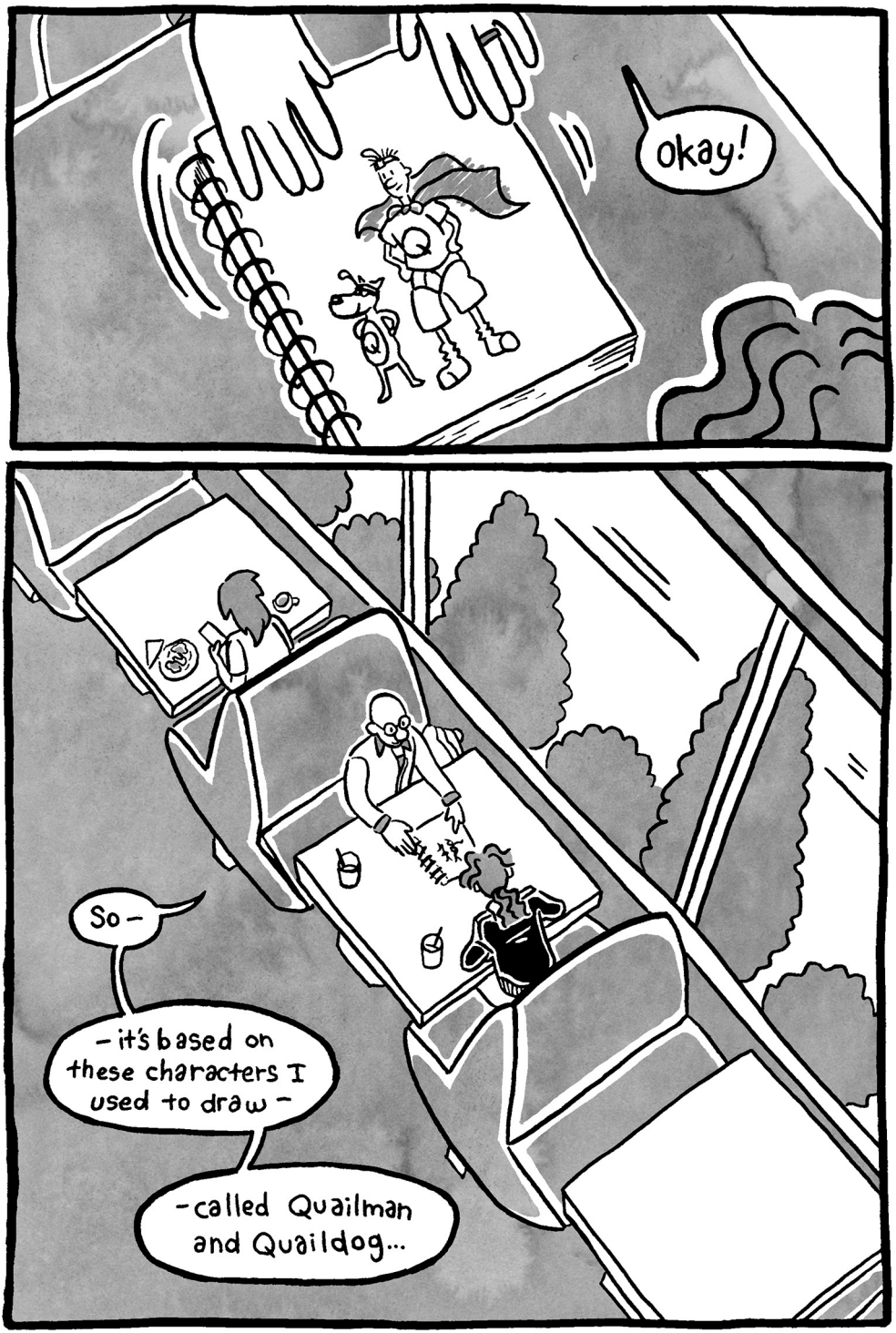
Oh Roger-
-I'm so sorry.
I'd heard but I'd never thought about...
Yeah, well.
It hit us all pretty hard.
Boomer & Willy totally turned around. Decided to be part of "Something big" in Ned's honor.
So they joined the fire department and started to do a lot of community building & outreach stuff.
Mean while, I climbed deep into the bottle...
Tried to drown it all out
It got real bad.
I don't even know how to explain it, Doug.

Chalky was real depressed.
I think he knew he was gay for a while, and was still all messed up trying to live up to his brother.
We really found each other in the bar.
We complained to one another every day. Opened up about how effed up we were.
He came out to me right away, and I admitted I was bi.
He wasn't an alcoholic like me, but he went totally dry to help me get out of my nightmare,
...and that's what he did.

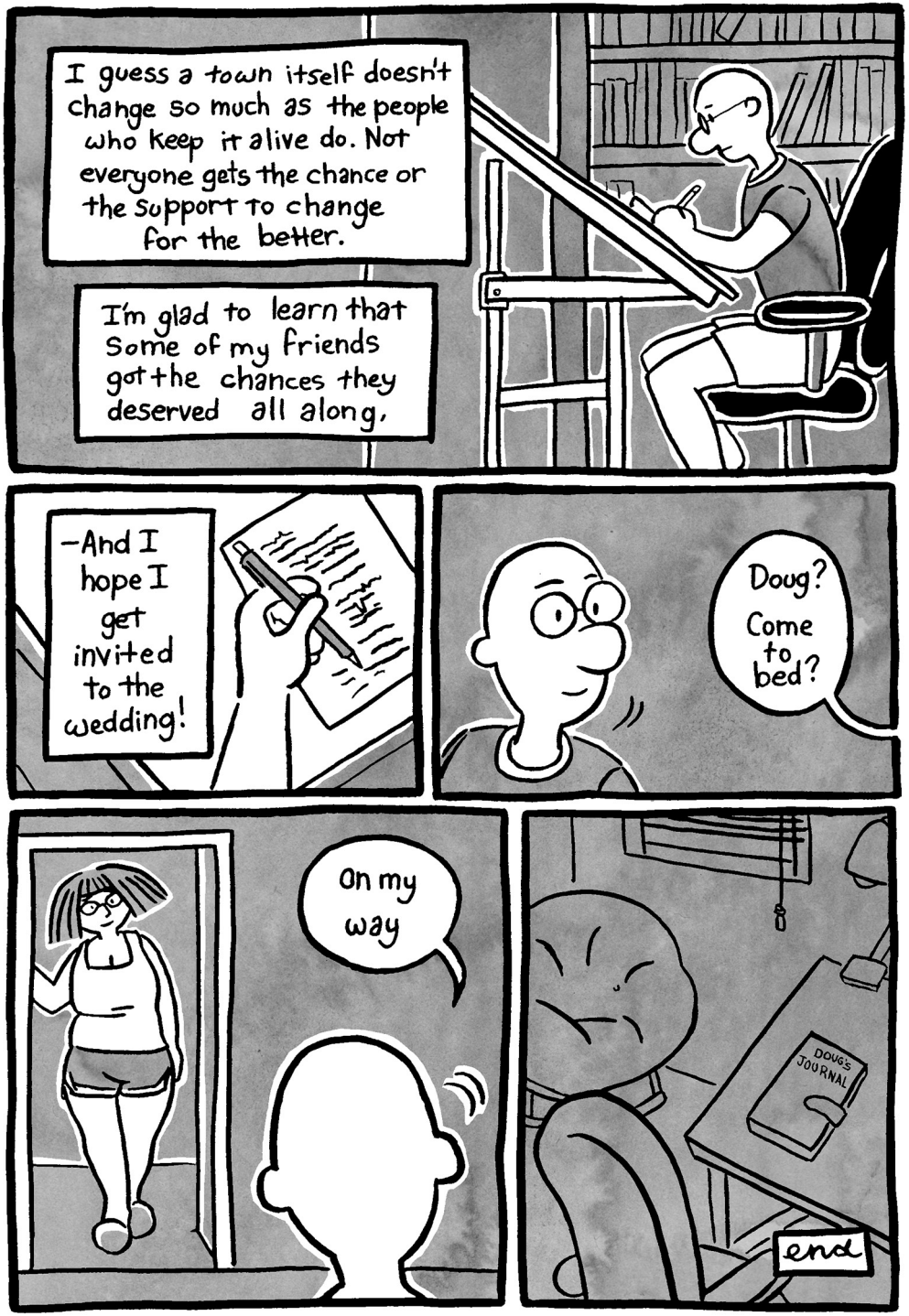
He dug me out of the deepest hole I could imagine. He helped me find myself again.
Now I never want to be without him.
He's really my hero. And I'm lucky to be with him.
I love him so much.
Roger, I had no idea. I'm so sorry you went through all that, I'm so glad he could be there for you.
Anyway, then it was BeetCoin and opening this place and- uh...
Um.
Doug?

I'm sorry about how I treated you back in school.
I wasn't happy with my life.
It took me years to come to terms with all my shit, but that doesn't excuse anything.
I've owed you this apology for a while.
I know I acted the way I did because I had a crush on you.
You were...my friend despite it all... and...
...the kind of guy I secretly wished I was strong enough to be.
I expressed my insecurities by bullying you
I can't take that back.
But I hope you'll forgive me.

Oh Roger,
I absolutely forgive you.
I'm sorry I couldn't forgive you sooner.
I mean it.
Thanks
Now tell me about this graphic novel!
Sounds personal, So after everything I told you, its only fair I hear all about it
Haha, okay, that's fair.


okay!
So –
– it's based on these characters I used to draw –
– called Quailman and Quaildog...

Hey Cutie!
Goin' my way?
How was lunch?
Did you bring up your pronouns?
no-
I didn't want to get into it.
Patti & BeeBe did most of the talking anyway.
It was nice to see them, but I probably won't again until the next funeral-
or wedding!
wedding?


I guess a town itself doesn't change so much as the people who keep it alive do. Not everyone gets the chance or the support to change for the better.
I'm glad to learn that some of my friends got the chances they deserved all along.
-And I hope I get invited to the wedding!
Doug? Come to bed?
On my way
DOUG'S JOURNAL
end

Pat and I conceived this comic at a 90s themed graduation party in 2019 as we reminisced about Doug and, specifically, about Roger Klotz.

In a lot of clickbait articles and listicles capitalizing on 90s cartoon nostalgia, characters' "Where are they now?" futures often lack the spirit of the series they're from. In those about *Doug* characters, Roger is doomed to some tragic fate: he grows up a lonely, depressed alcoholic or a poor, angry mess who dies of cancer – as if this is the inevitable fate of a 14 year old cartoon bully.

While it is true that bullying is traumatizing, in none of his speculative futures is he extended the compassion that *Doug* was framed around. It's never considered that Roger was a sensitive, creative, dyslexic child who wasn't given the support or encouragement he needed.

So we envisioned a future in which he was.

This isn't a manifesto. We're not claiming that bullies must be redeemed or that Chalky Studebaker is textually gay. We're writing the kind of story we want to read while revisiting old friends, and being kind to them, as we would anyone else, anyone "real."

Doug has always been, to us, a story about expressing empathy and extending kindness, even – and especially – to people who are not at their best.

We wanted to speculate in that spirit.
We hope we did.

With love,
Kori Michele

Web: Korimichele.com // @korimichele on twitter

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